The Divine Author of the Old Testament Recorded *the Progression and Purpose of God’s Covenants* in Redemptive History

Kingdom Through Covenant Climaxing in Christ

When the Old and New Testaments are read alongside one another, at least seven historical stages are apparent in God’s kingdom-building program. The initial five are the foundation for the ultimate fulfillment in the last two. Interwoven into this story of redemption is a progression of five overlapping covenants, which portray the development of God’s global purposes with humanity.

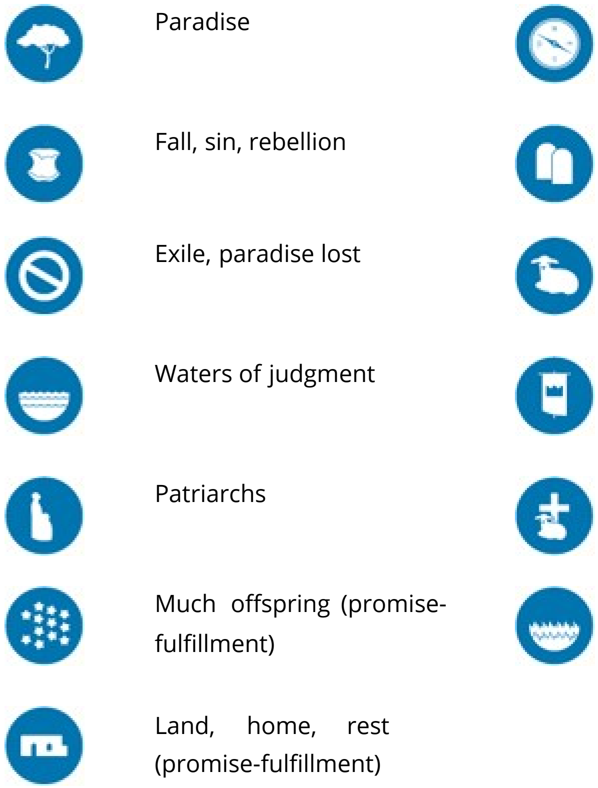
Figure 1.1. God’s Kingdom-Building Program at a Glance

Old Testament Narrative History	**K**	**KICKOFF AND REBELLION**	1. Creation, fall, and flood (ca. ? B.C.)
	I	**INSTRUMENT OF BLESSING**	2. Patriarchs (⚐ca. 2100–1850 B.C.)
	N	**NATION REDEEMED AND COMMISSIONED**	3. Exodus, Sinai, and wilderness (⚐ca. 1450–1400 B.C.)
	G	**GOVERNMENT IN THE PROMISED LAND**	4. Conquest and kingdoms (united and divided) (⚐ca. 1400–600 B.C.)
	D	**DISPERSION AND RETURN**	5. Exile and initial restoration (⚐ca. 600–400 B.C.)
New Testament Narrative History	**O**	**OVERLAP OF THE AGES**	6. Christ’s work and the church age (⚐ca. 4 B.C.–A.D. ?)
			7. Christ’s return and

Jason S. DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared about: A Survey of Jesus’ Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013).

	M	ACCOMPLISHED	tion (ca. A.D. ?–eternity)

Figure 1.2. God’s K-I-N-G-D-O-M Story Through Images



Paradise

Fall, sin, rebellion

Exile, paradise lost

Waters of judgment

Patriarchs

Much offspring (promise-fulfillment)

Land, home, rest (promise-fulfillment)

Blessing to all nations (promise-fulfillment)

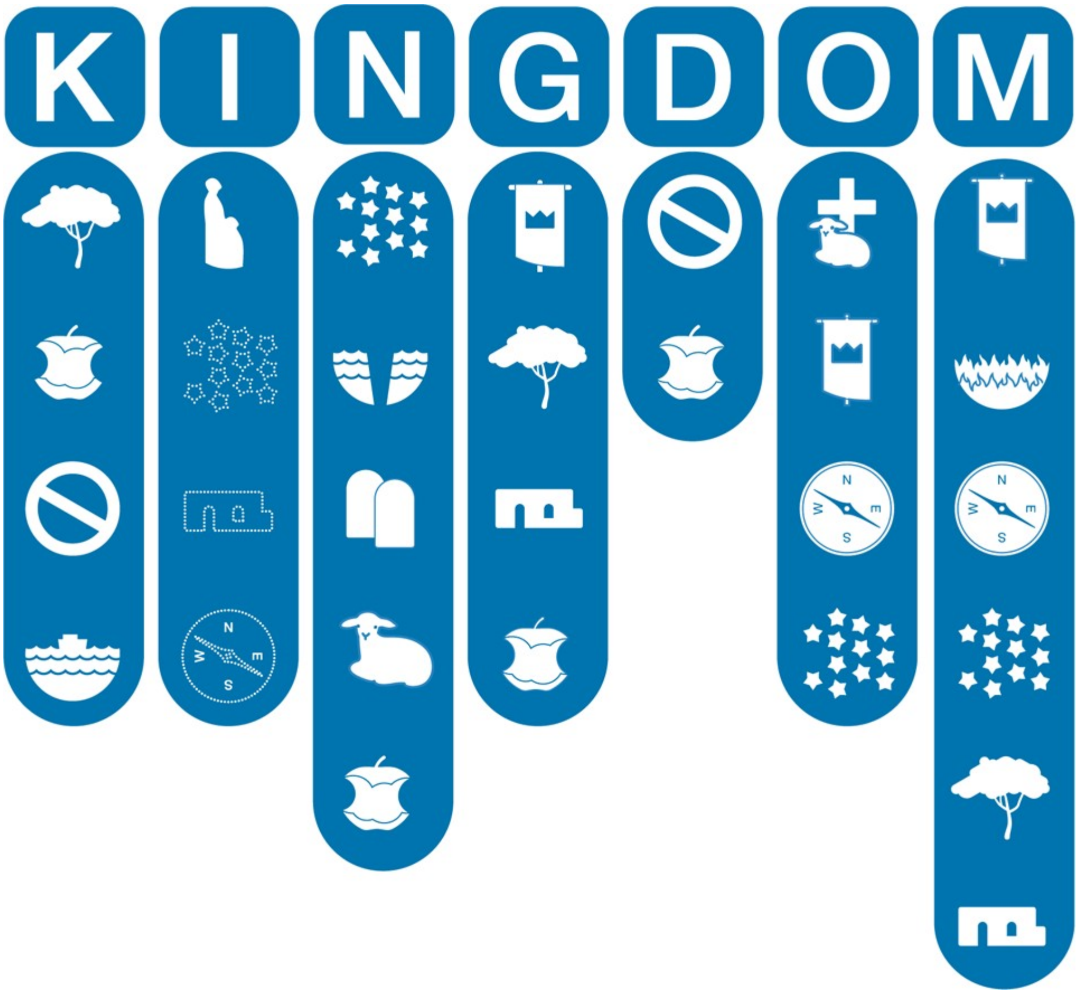
Giving of the law

Penal substitutionary atonement

Conquest, kingdom established

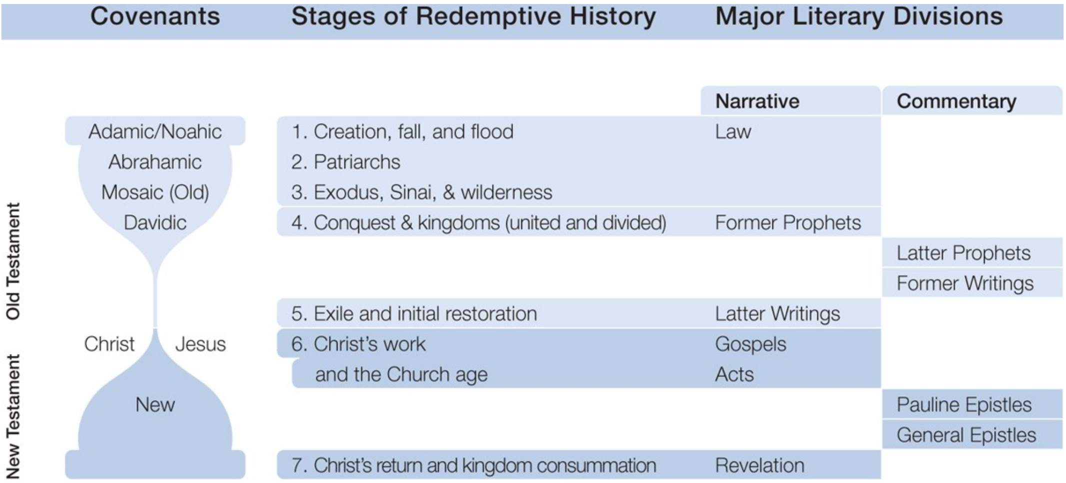
Saving/atoning work of Christ

Fires of judgment



The interrelationship of the covenants can be portrayed like an hourglass, with the most universal scope occurring at the two ends and the work of Christ at the center. The Adamic/Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants are all named in light of the covenant head or mediator through whom God entered into a relationship with his elect. The new covenant is titled in light of its contrast to the "old" Mosaic administration and provides climax to all God's purposes in history (see Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:6–13).

Figure 1.3. The History of Redemption in the Context of Scripture


Covenants
Stages of Redemptive History
Major Literary Divisions
Narrative
Commentary
Adamic/Noahic
Abrahamic
Mosaic (Old)
Davidic
Christ
Jesus
New
Old Testament
New Testament
1. Creation, fall, and flood
2. Patriarchs
3. Exodus, Sinai, & wilderness
4. Conquest & kingdoms (united and divided)
5. Exile and initial restoration
6. Christ's work and the Church age
7. Christ's return and kingdom consummation
Law
Former Prophets
Latter Prophets
Former Writings
Latter Writings
Gospels
Acts
Pauline Epistles
General Epistles
Revelation

Significantly, *Jesus' saving work is the fulcrum upon which the entire Bible pivots*. To him all redemptive history points, and from him all fulfillment comes. As Jesus himself said, "Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17). The Old Testament is Christo-telic (*telos* is Greek for "goal, end"). Each of the five covenants culminates in the person and work of Messiah Jesus.

- In fulfillment of the *Adamic/Noahic covenant*, Jesus is the Son of Man, last Adam, and image of God (Mark 10:45; 14:62; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 4:4).
- In fulfillment of the *Abrahamic covenant*, Jesus is the offspring of Abraham and agent of universal blessing (Gen. 22:17b–18; Acts 3:25–26; Gal. 3:16).
- In fulfillment of the *Mosaic (old) covenant*, Jesus represents Israel and stands as God's Son, Yahweh's servant, the embodiment of wisdom, the one who fulfilled the law's demands, and the substance of all covenant shadows (Exod. 4:22–23; Isa. 49:3, 5–6; Matt. 3:17; 11:2, 19; 12:42; 13:54; John 2:19–21; Acts 3:25–26; Rom. 5:19; Col. 2:17; Heb. 9:9–12; 10:1).
- In fulfillment of the *Davidic covenant*, Jesus is the King of the Jews and Son of David (Matt. 2:1; 21:9; Luke 1:32–33).
- In fulfillment of the *new covenant* promises, Jesus is the prophet like Moses who was to come and the only true mediator between God and man (Deut. 18:15, 18; Luke 7:16; 22:20; Acts 3:22–26; 7:37; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.… Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins" (Isa. 11:1, 5). *Almonds on a tree near Aijalon*.

The Story of God's Glory in Christ

The entire Bible pivots on the person and work of Jesus. To him all redemptive history points, and from him all fulfillment comes.

What accompanies this messianic trajectory is the sustained assertion throughout Scripture that *everything God does is for his glory*. That is, God's ultimate goal at every stage in his kingdom program is the preservation and display of himself as the supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier of the world, ultimately through his messianic representative. As such, the Bible's grand narrative has rightly been called "The Story of God's Glory."[2] What follows is a brief overview of each stage in God's kingdom-building plan.

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[2] See John Piper, "The Goal of God in Redemptive History," in *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (rev. and exp.; Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 308–21. This appendix is not found in the 2011 edition.

"The high mountains are for the wild goats.... O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (Ps. 104:18, 24). ***Left**: A male Nubian ibex "wild goat" at Machtesh Ramon (photo by Kim Guess);* ***Right**: a heard of male Nubian ibex at En Gedi.*

K

KICKOFF AND REBELLION (creation, fall, and flood). As the maker and sustainer of all things visible and invisible, God deserves the highest praise (1 Chron. 29:11; Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11). God created humans to image him and commissioned them to display his greatness throughout the world from generation to generation (Gen. 1:26–28). Like a temple paradise, the Garden of Eden was to be a place where Yahweh was exalted over all, and it was to be ever expanding as the first couple would carry God's image to the ends of the earth, thus reflecting, representing, and resembling the divine glory for all to see. However, Adam and Eve failed to honor God rightly, and in Adam, all the rest of humanity sinned, *falling short of God's glory* (Rom. 1:21–23; 3:23; 5:12–19). Before subjecting the world to futility in hope (Rom. 8:20–21) and before casting humanity's parents into exile from the garden, the Lord promised to reestablish cosmic order through a male human deliverer, the ministry of whom would display *great glory* through divine grace (Gen. 3:15; John 1:14). Humanity's sustained wickedness after the fall resulted in the flood, but God preserved a remnant whose hope was in the coming redeemer (Gen. 4:25–26; 5:22; 6:8–9), and he confirmed through Noah his covenant with creation (Gen. 6:7–9, 18; 8:21; 9:9–11). At the Tower of Babel, however, such mercy was matched by human self-exaltation over God-exaltation, resulting in more divine judgment (11:1–9, esp. v. 4).

I

INSTRUMENT OF BLESSING (patriarchs). It was *to the praise of his glorious grace* that God elected and created a people for himself (Jer. 13:11; Isa. 43:6–7; Eph. 1:4–6). *God's glory* compelled Abraham to leave Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2), so that through Israel the nations of the earth could be restored into relationship with their Creator (Gen. 12:3). Though it would take a miracle, Abraham believed God could do for him what he could not do on his own, and his faith in Yahweh's promise of offspring was counted as righteousness (15:6; cf. 18:14). To exalt his faithfulness and in anticipation of future mercy, Yahweh vowed to fulfill his promise of land to Abraham's offspring (15:17–18) and provided a substitute sacrifice in the place of Isaac (22:12–14). He also reaffirmed that his blessing of the nations would be accomplished through a royal representative, now known to be from Judah, who would destroy evil and reestablish world peace (22:17b–18; 24:60; 49:8–10). For such ultimate good, God sent Joseph to Egypt, preserving the children of Jacob/Israel alive in the midst of famine, while they awaited the Promised Land (45:7–8; 50:20, 24–25).

N

NATION REDEEMED AND COMMISSIONED (exodus, Sinai, and wilderness). In fulfillment of his promises, God sustained and multiplied Israel through four hundred years of Egyptian bondage (Exod. 1:7; cf. Gen. 15:13–14). *For the sake of his name and reputation*, God brought the plagues on Egypt, redeemed Israel from slavery through the Red Sea, and preserved his people after their sins in the wilderness (Exod. 9:15–16; 14:4; 32:11–13; Num. 14:13–19; 2 Sam. 7:23; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 21–22; Ps. 106:7–8). *For the display of his holiness*, he gave Israel his law through Moses, called his people to radical love overflowing in obedience, and provided a means of atonement so that they could be near him, his presence alone distinguishing them from the nations (Exod. 19:4–6; 20:3–5; 33:16; Lev. 10:3; Deut. 4:5–8; 6:4–5). He also restated his promise that a deliverer would arise from Jacob who would exercise international influence (Num. 24:17–19). Nevertheless, he did not overcome Israel's hard-heartedness (Deut. 29:4), but he foretold Israel's sustained rebellion and exile (31:16–17, 29) and promised restoration that would exalt God alone as the enabler and gracious sustainer of love for him, of commandment keeping, and of the covenant (30:6, 8).

The LORD said to Pharaoh, "By now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exod. 9:15–16). *Chefren's Pyramid from Egypt's Old Kingdom (⚐ third millennium B.C.). Already built during the days of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, this is the second largest of the great pyramids in the Giza necropolis on the outskirts of Cairo, Egypt; archaeological excavations are in the foreground*.

G

GOVERNMENT IN THE PROMISED LAND (conquest and kingdoms). Through the conquest, Yahweh exalted himself before the nations as the only true God, fulfilling his promises to give Israel rest in the land as an echo of the Edenic paradise (Josh. 11:23; 21:43–45; cf. Exod. 15:17). In the Canaanite Rahab's words, "The LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11; cf. 8:24). The majority of the twelve tribes of Israel, however, soon forgot the Lord and progressively became Canaanized (Judg. 2:10–23), which ultimately resulted in their ruin. Refusing to listen to God's gracious appeal via his prophets, the united and divided kingdoms all came to an end, climaxing in the destruction of the temple and exile (2 Kings 17:13–23; ch. 25).

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Nevertheless, in the midst of Israel's rise and fall, the Lord graciously renewed his promise of a coming royal redeemer (1 Sam. 2:10), raised up King David as a foreshadow of this deliverer, and declared that through him God's universal kingdom purposes would find fulfillment (2 Sam. 7:12–16; cf. Ps. 2; 72:17). The anticipated savior-king would proclaim Yahweh's endtimes reign—the year of his favor and the day of his vengeance (Isa. 52:7; 61:2). He also, while himself guiltless (50:9; 53:9), would, through a substitutionary death, satisfy God's wrath against sin and would, by his righteousness, "make many to be accounted righteous" (53:5, 10–11; cf. John 11:50–52; Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21).

In all, one principle governed God's actions during the united and divided kingdoms: "Those who *honor me* I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30). Whether dealing with barren woman or priest, prophet or king, shepherd or warrior, Israelite or foreigner, God acted *for his glory* (Josh. 24:14; 1 Sam. 2:1–10; 6:5–6, 19–20; 12:20–22; 15:22–23; 17:46; 1 Kings 8:43; 18:36–39; 2 Kings 19:19, 34).

D

DISPERSION AND RETURN (exile and initial restoration). Yahweh cast Israel from the Promised Land because of their failure to live for him (2 Kings 17:7; 2 Chron. 36:16), but he also promised that, in the latter days, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed" and that "one like a son of man" would receive "dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him" (Dan 2:44; 7:13–14). Isaiah had anticipated *that for his own sake*, the Lord would sustain Israel through exile, return a remnant to the land, and use them as missionaries to represent him rightly in the world (Isa. 48:9, 11): "*For my name's sake* I defer my anger, *for the sake of my praise* I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.… *For my own sake, for my own sake*, I do it, for how should *my name* be profaned? *My glory* I will not give to another." Similarly, Ezekiel stated (Ezek. 36:23): "I will vindicate *the holiness of my great name*, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord … when *through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes*." So it is that Daniel prayed that God would act "for your own sake," redeeming his people and forgiving their sin (Dan. 9:15–19). Upon the initial restoration, God called the Jews to rebuild the temple "that I may be glorified" (Hag. 1:8), and he also charged them to *honor and fear him* as the "great King" over all (Mal. 1:6, 14). Sadly, the majority of the restored remained cold to God, and the light of kingdom hope was dimmed in the darkness of sustained slavery

(Ezra 9:8–9; Neh. 9:36).

“I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another” (Isa. 48:10–11). *A spouted silver jar and a silver bowl from Ur, dated by some to ca. 2600 B.C., almost two-thousand years before Isaiah (from the British Museum).*

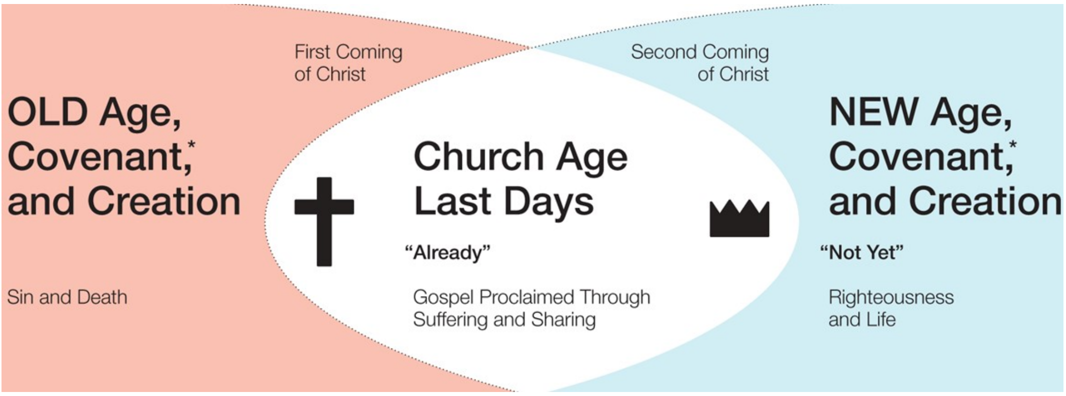
O

OVERLAP OF THE AGES (Christ’s work and the church age). “But when the fullness of time had come” (Gal. 4:4), God caused the light to dawn in the person of Christ (Matt. 4:16–17; John 8:12). One of the mysterious parts of God’s kingdom program was the way Jesus’ first coming was as suffering servant, and only in his second coming would he show himself fully as conquering king. In his initial appearing, he proclaimed “the year of the LORD’s favor,” and only later would he bring “the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa. 61:2; cf. Luke 4:19). “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Heb. 9:28). Today we rest in an overlap of the ages, with Christ having delivered us from “the present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) yet only in a way that lets us taste “the powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:5). Figure 1.4 attempts to visualize the already-but-not-yet aspects of the kingdom in this overlap of the ages (see esp. Rom. 8:18–24; Eph. 1:3–14; 1 Peter 1:3–13).

With respect to the *already* aspect of the kingdom, for God’s reign to be celebrated on earth, his wrath toward the sin of Israel and the world needed to be appeased. So in the fullness of time, after four hundred years of prophetic silence but in direct fulfillment of Old Testament hopes, God the Father sent his eternal Son to earth as the promised, royal deliverer "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). In the "great exchange" of the ages, God counted every believer's sin to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to every believer:

- "For our sake [the Father] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21).
- "And because of [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

Figure 1.4. Redemptive History and the Overlap of the Ages


First Coming
of Christ
Second Coming
of Christ
OLD Age, Covenant,* and Creation
Sin and Death
Church Age
Last Days
"Already"
Gospel Proclaimed Through Suffering and Sharing
NEW Age, Covenant,* and Creation
"Not Yet"
Righteousness and Life

*At one level, the old and new covenants do not overlap, for Jesus "makes the first one obsolete" and "does away with the first in order to establish the second" (Heb. 8:13; 10:9). At another level, however, because the old (Mosaic) covenant represents the age of death in Adam, the writer of Hebrews can add, "And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" (8:13), noting that while "the end of the ages" is already upon us (9:26), the consummation of "the age to come" has not yet been realized (6:5; cf. 2 Cor. 3:11).

- "For as by the one man's disobedience [i.e., Adam] the many were made sinners, so by the one's man's obedience [i.e., Jesus Christ] the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19).

The good news of God's end-times reign is nothing less than "*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Cor. 4:6; cf. 1 Tim. 1:11). Jesus lived *for the glory of his Father* (John 7:18; 17:4), and his death and resurrection vindicated *God's righteousness* and exalted *God's glory* (John 12:27–28; 17:1; Rom. 3:25–26). God forgives sins and welcomes believers *for his glory* (Isa. 43:25; Ps. 25:11; Rom. 15:7), and he calls everyone to live *for his glory* always (Matt. 5:16; John 5:44; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 1:11; 1 Peter 4:11), which includes a radical commitment to spreading a passion for God's supremacy throughout the world, both through sharing and suffering (Matt. 5:11–12; 28:18–20). Within this context, God promises to honor all who *seek to exalt him* and not themselves (1 Sam. 2:30; Luke 18:14; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5), even as they await the “blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

It is *right, necessary*, and *loving* that God act for his own glory and call us to do the same. It is right because Yahweh alone is preeminent over all things and is therefore worthy of worship (Exod. 34:14; Deut. 32:39). It is necessary because if Yahweh gave his glory to another, declaring something else as being worthy of highest praise, he would stop being God (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). It is loving because Yahweh alone can save (43:10–12) and because in his presence is fullness of joy forever (Ps. 16:11; cf. Matt. 13:44).

M **MISSION ACCOMPLISHED** (Christ’s return and kingdom consummation). God’s mercy, wrath, and power are all directed at making known “the riches of his glory” (Rom. 9:22–23), and only those who “fear God and give him glory” will escape divine wrath when the Son of Man returns *to be glorified* in his saints (Rev. 14:7; 2 Thess. 1:9–10; cf. Matt. 16:27; 24:30; 25:31; John 17:24). Judgment day will come (Rom. 2:5; 2 Peter 3:7), and with it the consummation of the new creation, when the righteous will be perfected (1 Thess. 5:23–24; Heb. 12:23) and *the glory of God* will give light to all (Rev. 21:24). In this day, those ransomed “from every tribe and language and people and nation” will celebrate eternally in the presence of God, declaring, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Rev. 5:9; 7:10). Here all rest will be realized, pleasures perfected, the curse conquered, and Jesus exalted and treasured forevermore (21:3–4; 22:3–4).

“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: ‘We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in.… Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD God is an everlasting rock’ ” (Isa. 26:1–2, 4). *Jerusalem’s Old City walls*.

The Divine Author of the Old Testament Highlighted How the *Old (Mosaic) Covenant Was Established, Enforced, and Enjoyed*

All five of the major covenants play key roles in the unfolding of the seven-stage redemptive drama. However, the most dominant from a literary perspective are the *old* (Mosaic) covenant and the *new* covenant in Christ. Indeed, the early church named the two parts of the Bible after these covenants (Old *Testament* and New *Testament*).[9]

On the whole, the old (Mosaic) covenant represented an age of death. It is true that Jesus' Bible testifies that God always preserved a faithful remnant, and it is only because of this group who preserved and held fast to God's Word—loyal parents, priests, prophets, politicians, and the like—that the first three-fourths of the Bible even exists! Nevertheless, for the majority of Israel, God's call to love him from the heart and to serve as his witnesses in the world was met with stubbornness and lack of faith, which resulted in the breaking of the covenant and the need for a new one (Jer. 31:31–32).

It is Yahweh's special covenant relationship with Israel, instituted at Sinai, that controls the Old Testament's three divisions. The old (Mosaic) covenant is *established* in the Law, *enforced* in the Prophets, and *enjoyed* in the Writings.

The Law: The Old (Mosaic) Covenant Established

The Law, also called the Pentateuch, is the Bible's first five books. It is devoted to clarifying God's relationship with and purpose for Israel in the context of the world. Genesis provides a "kingdom prologue" that sets the stage for Israel's mission, which is then detailed in Exodus through Deuteronomy. Israel enjoys God's favor for the sake of the nations (Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:4–6; Deut. 4:5–8), and through Israel God would raise a royal deliverer who would defeat evil and establish universal blessing (Gen. 3:15; 22:17b–18; 49:8, 10; Num. 24:17–19). While Israel's own stubbornness would result in their exile (Deut. 31:16–17, 29), the mercy of Yahweh would triumph in an age of restoration blessing that would benefit Israel and, ultimately, the nations (4:30–31; 30:1–10 with 4:5–8; 32:21).

The Prophets: The Old (Mosaic) Covenant Enforced

The Prophets contain two sections, the first a *narrative history* of Israel's covenant failure and the second a *prophetic commentary* on the people's rebellion that places their sin within the overall scope of God's redemptive plan. Whereas the Former Prophets (Joshua–Kings) focus on *what* happened in Israel's downward spiral from conquest through monarchy to exile, the Latter Prophets (Jeremiah–The Twelve [Minor Prophets]) develop *why* the drama went the way it did. God's covenant enforcers, the prophets, colored Israel's history as an age of darkness, the old (Mosaic) covenant resulting in Israel's condemnation (2 Kings 17:14–18; 2 Cor. 3:9). Nevertheless, the narrative and sermons also offer glimmers of light, heightening anticipation for full kingdom fulfillment in a new covenant and setting the stage for the testimony of the Writings.

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[9] From the Latin *testamentum*, meaning "will, covenant."

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"This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2). *Machtesh Ramon in the Negeb with sunrise*.

The Writings: The Old (Mosaic) Covenant Enjoyed

Like the Prophets but in reverse order, the Writings include both commentary and narrative. Unlike the Prophets, however, the Writings are dominated by a positive thrust, giving voice to the faithful remnant who hoped in the consummation of God's kingdom. The commentary of the Former Writings opens with Ruth, which colors all that follows in messianic anticipation. Psalms through Lamentations then clarify *how those hoping in God's kingdom were to live*—that is, how they could maintain satisfaction in God amidst life's pleasures and pains. Following Lamentations, which resituates the reader in the exilic context highlighted at the end of 2 Kings, the narrative resumes in Daniel and continues through Chronicles, detailing God's preservation of a remnant in exile, the people's initial restoration to the land, and the promise of complete kingdom realization. Because the story is unfinished at the end of Chronicles, the reader is pushed into the New Testament for fulfillment, which is ultimately realized in the person of Christ and his church.

The New Testament’s Parallel Structure

Intriguingly, the arrangement of the New Testament books in many ways parallels that of the Old. Not only is the narrative-commentary pattern the same (see Fig. 1.7), but also the covenantal structure can be viewed as parallel. The new covenant is *established* in the Gospels, *enforced* in Acts and the Pauline Epistles, and *enjoyed* in the General Epistles and Revelation. The last category may be the most questionable, for the General Epistles and Revelation include covenant enforcement and regularly address tribulation. Can you really call this “joy”? In response, like the Old Testament Writings, which are future-oriented and loaded with trials, joy in the last section of the New Testament is one of persevering hope, experienced through suffering and in light of the glory that is to be revealed at the consummation of the kingdom (Heb. 12:2–3; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6–8; 4:13; 1 John 1:4; 2 John 4, 12; 3 John 3–4; Jude 24; Rev. 18:20; 19:6–8).[10]

Figure 1.7. The Bible’s Covenantal Structure

	Established (Savior)	**Enforced (Sovereign)**		**Enjoyed (Satisfier)**	
OLD COVENANT	Law	Former Prophets	Latter Prophets	Former Writings	Latter Writings
NEW COVENANT	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation [11]
	Narrative	**Narrative**	**Commentary**	**Commentary**	**Narrative**

Synthesis and Conclusion

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[10] David Trobisch argues that the New Testament canon was fixed as early as A.D. 125 and originally bore a different arrangement in the commentary section: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Revelation (*Paul’s Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994]; idem, *The First Edition of the New Testament* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000]; cf. C. E. Hill, “The New Testament Canon: Deconstructio ad Absurdum?” *JETS* 52 [2009]: 101–20; idem, *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010]). Significantly, regardless of how the New Testament commentary books are ordered, the general pattern “narrative → narrative → commentary → commentary → narrative” remains parallel to the structure of Jesus’ Bible.

The Bible's Frame, Form, Focus, and Fulcrum

In order to synthesize the Old Testament message, it will be helpful to review what we have already learned regarding what the Bible is about (its *frame*), how it is transmitted (its *form*), why it was given (its *focus*), and around whom it is centered (its *fulcrum*).

- **The Frame (Content: What?).** The Bible is the revelation of God, who reigns over all, standing as the source, sustainer, and goal of all things (Rom. 11:36). Through creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, this supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier has been shaping a people for himself in the context of the world. The Bible is about his kingdom building process—God's reign over God's people in God's land for God's glory (Luke 4:43; Acts 1:3; 20:25; 28:23, 31).
- **The Form (Means: How?).** Throughout redemptive history, God's relationship with his people has been maintained through a series of covenants. The most dominant of these are the old (Mosaic) covenant and the new covenant in Christ, which together provide the thematic structure of the Christian Bible's two parts. Addressing the age of death, the old covenant was *established* in the Law, *enforced* in the Prophets, and *enjoyed* in the Writings. In contrast, the new covenant, which overviews the age of life, was *established* in the Gospels, *enforced* in Acts and the Pauline Epistles, and *enjoyed* in the General Epistles and Revelation.
- **The Focus (Purpose: Why?).** The ultimate goal behind all God's actions is the preservation and display of his glory, and it is to this end that all Scripture points. Because all things are from him, through him, and to him, God's glory is exalted over all things (Rom. 11:36) and should be the goal of our lives (1 Cor. 10:31).

"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!" (Ps. 150:6). *A close-up of a camel in the Judean wilderness*.

- **The Fulcrum (Sphere: Whom?).** Jesus Christ is the one to whom all redemptive history points, and the one from whom all fulfillment comes. The entire Bible is centered on him, who stands as the promised messianic deliverer and who secures reconciliation with God for all who believe in him as the divine, crucified Messiah. A universal call to repentance and whole-life surrender is the natural overflow of Jesus' redemptive, kingdom work.

Figure 1.8. The Bible's Frame, Form, Focus, and Fulcrum	
Frame	God's Kingdom
Form	through Covenant (Established, Enforced, and Enjoyed)

Jason S. DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared about: A Survey of Jesus' Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013).

Focus	for God's Glory
Fulcrum	in Christ (Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier)

Stated succinctly, the message of the Christian Scriptures can be synthesized as *God's kingdom through covenant for his glory in Christ*.[12] Or, put another way, the Bible's call is for Jew and Gentile alike to magnify God as the supreme Savior, Sovereign, and Satisfier of the world through Messiah Jesus. The Old Testament provides the foundation for this message; the New Testament supplies the fulfillment. Although every synthesis can be found wanting in light of the depths of God's greatness and mankind's fallen state, Figure 1.9 is an attempt to capture the entire Bible's message in a single graphic.

How would you summarize the Bible's message? Here is my attempt: *God's kingdom through covenant for his glory in Christ*.

A Commencement Challenge

As you read through this Christian interpretation of the Old Testament, my prayer is that you will encounter God and find yourself changed more into his likeness. As you revel in the message of his Word, your life should develop heightened gratitude and hope, greater surrender and commitment, more intense delight and passion, all toward God in Christ. You should become more God-exalting and less dependent on things of this world. You should find yourself less self-absorbed and more ready to pour your life out in love for others, all in the strength that God supplies.

The prophet Isaiah foretold that, in the age of restoration, the remnant of Israel and the nations would all "be taught by the LORD" (Isa. 54:13; cf. Jer. 31:34). John 6:44–45 records Jesus citing this passage and then saying, "Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me" (John 6:45). May the Lord now grant you ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart to understand, all in a way that helps you move toward Christ in heart and soul, "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18).[13]

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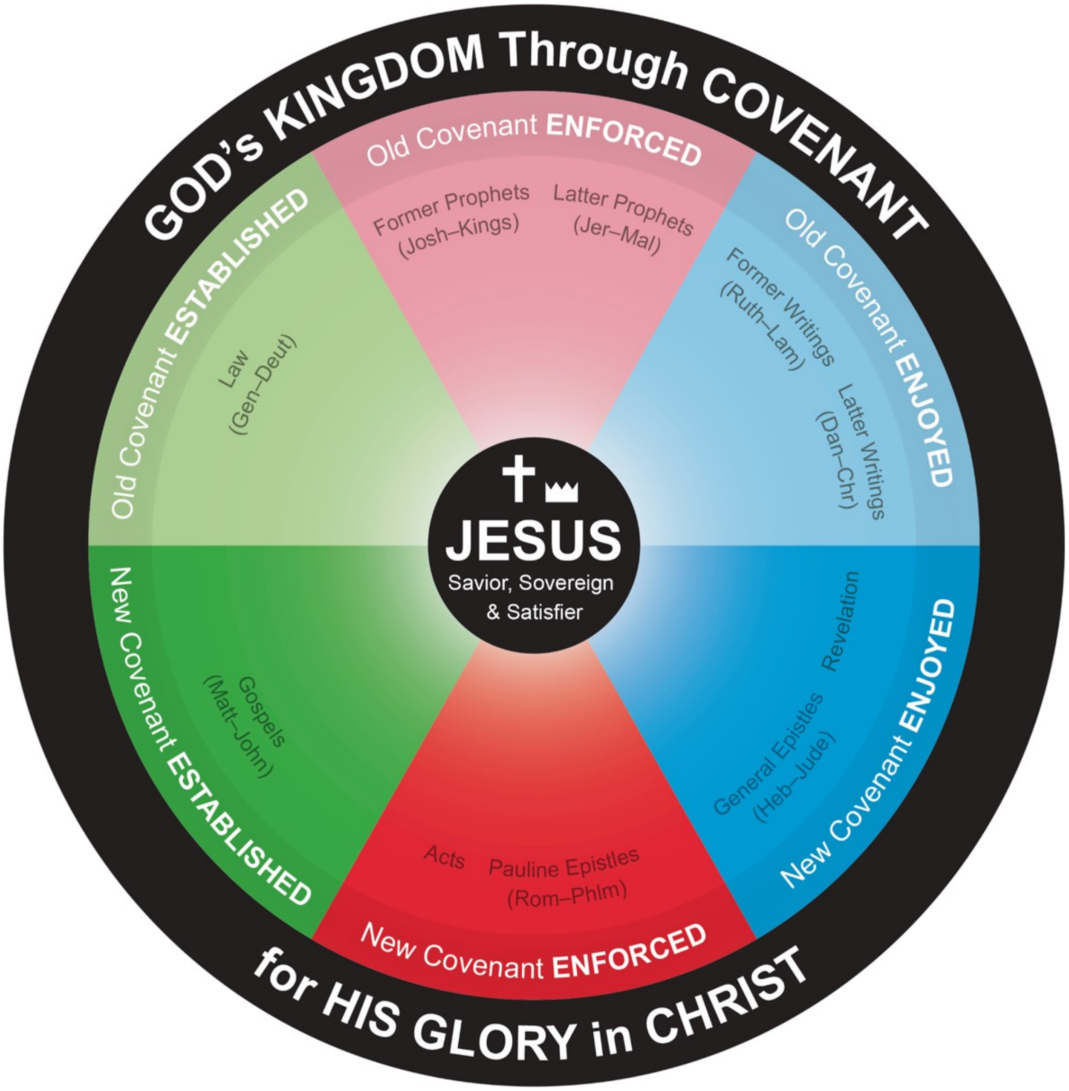
[12] I thank my friend and colleague Jason C. Meyer, who first presented to me the simple but profound multi-orbed synthesis of the Bible's message as "God's kingdom through covenant for his glory (What? How? Why?)."

[13] This gift was not granted to most of old covenant Israel (Deut. 29:4; Rom. 11:8), but God promised it for all in the new covenant (Deut. 30:6, 8; 2 Cor. 4:6). May it be so for you, even as you wait "for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Figure 1.9 The Bible’s Structure and Message[14]


GOD’s KINGDOM Through COVENANT
Old Covenant ESTABLISHED
Law
(Gen–Deut)
Old Covenant ENFORCED
Former Prophets
(Josh–Kings)
Latter Prophets
(Jer–Mal)
Old Covenant ENJOYED
Former Writings
(Ruth–Lam)
Latter Writings
(Dan–Chr)
JESUS
Savior, Sovereign
& Satisfier
New Covenant ESTABLISHED
Gospels
(Matt–John)
New Covenant ENFORCED
Acts
Pauline Epistles
(Rom–Phlm)
New Covenant ENJOYED
General Epistles
(Heb–Jude)
Revelation
for HIS GLORY in CHRIST

Jason S. DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared about: A Survey of Jesus’ Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013).